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# Discrimination amongst Arctic Indigenous Sami and non-Sami Populations in Norway

Hansen, KL

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Journal of Northern Studies

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KETIL LENERT HANSEN, STEPHEN JAMES MINTON, ODDGEIR  
FRIBORG & TORE SØRLIE

# Discrimination amongst Arctic Indigenous Sami and Non-Sami Populations in Norway

The SAMINOR 2 Questionnaire Study

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**ABSTRACT** *Background:* Recent research demonstrates that for many indigenous Sami people, experiencing ethnic discrimination is a regular occurrence. The present study was designed to provide estimates of the prevalence of self-reported discrimination in order to identify specific settings where discrimination happened, to identify perpetrators and to examine individuals' responses to the discrimination.

*Methods:* In 2012, all inhabitants aged between 18 and 69 living in selected municipalities with both Sami and non-Sami settlements in mid- and northern Norway were mailed an invitation to participate in a questionnaire survey covering questions about discrimination (types

of discrimination, settings where discrimination happened, and who the perpetrator was). Altogether, 11,600 participated (a response rate of 27 %).

*Results:* In total, 2,496 (21.5 % of the sample) reported discrimination; of these, 29.8 % reported that discrimination happened during the past two years. Ethnic affiliation, age, education level, income and living area were all significantly associated with differences in the frequency of experiencing discrimination. Respondents with a strong Sami affiliation reported the highest levels of discrimination; in total, 50.8 % responded that they had been discriminated against, compared with 14.3 % of the non-Sami respondents (OR=6.16 CI:5.42–7.00). Sami with strong Sami affiliation reported having experienced significantly more discrimination over the past two years more than did the non-Sami respondents (16.5 % vs 4.4 % respectively;  $p < 0.001$ ; OR=4.15 CI:3.45–4.99). Additionally, Sami respondents reported experiencing discrimination in multiple settings more often than did non-Sami respondents ( $p < 0.001$ ). Respondents aged between 30 and 49 years, those with a medium high level of education, those with medium household income, and those living in Sami minority areas, reported the highest prevalences of discrimination. In terms of responses to discrimination, 37.6 % reported that they had done something to stop the discrimination, and 19.1 % reported that the discrimination had affected them a lot. Just 1.8 % of those who reported having been discriminated against had been in contact with the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman Service in Norway.

*Conclusion:* The findings from this study show that the Sami people still experience high levels of discrimination in Norwegian society. Our findings suggest that interventions specifically designed to prevent discrimination against the indigenous Sami people of Norway should be implemented.

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KEYWORDS discrimination, ethnicity, Arctic, Sami, indigenous, Norway

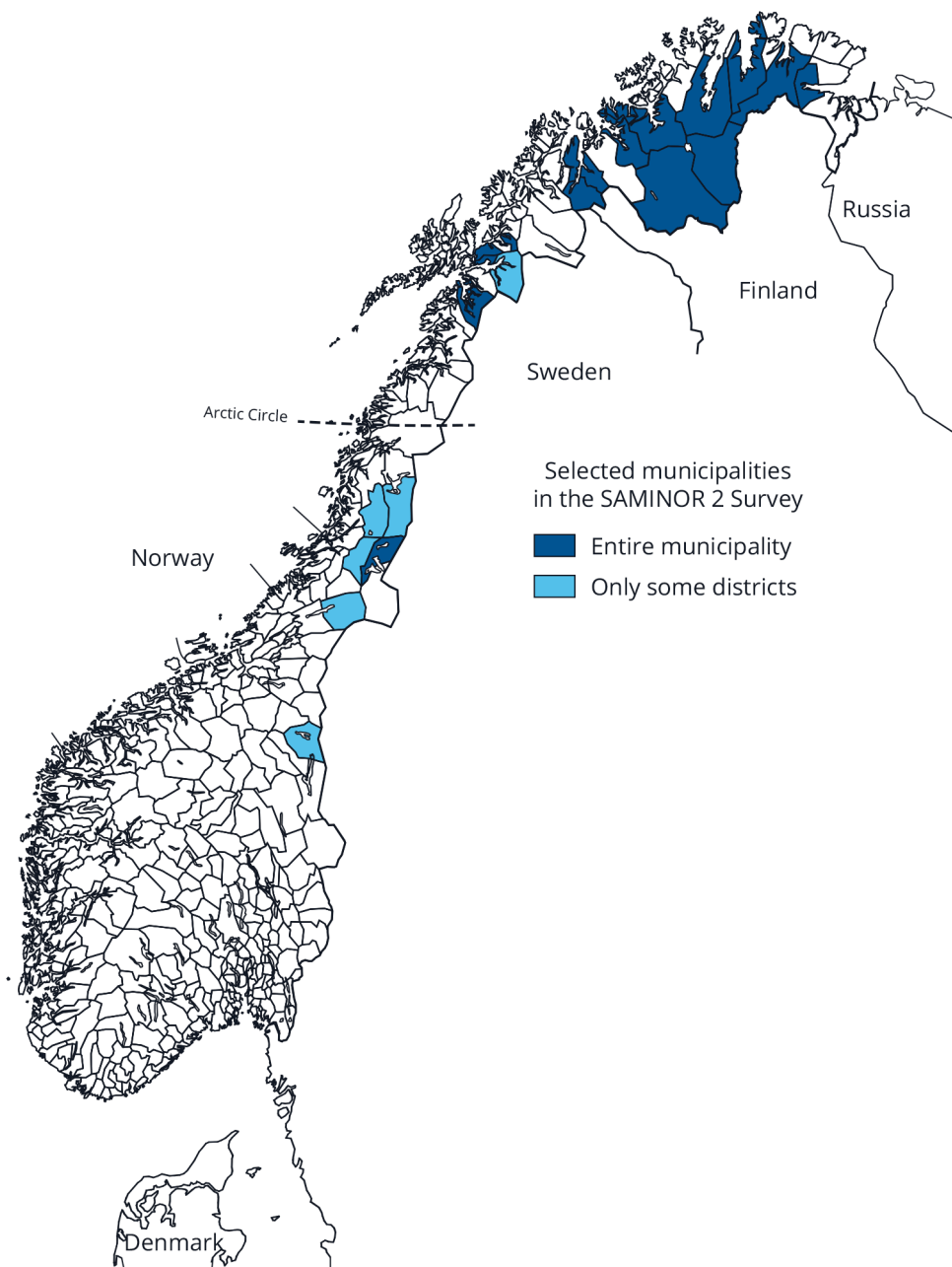
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## Background

Recent research in Norway shows that indigenous Sami adults report experiencing ethnic discrimination more frequently than ethnic Norwegians (Hansen 2008; Hansen 2011), and that it is associated with adverse health effects (Hansen 2015; Hansen, Melhus & Lund 2010; Hansen & Sørli 2012). The present paper extends those studies (Lund *et al.* 2007) by introducing a broader framework for the study of discrimination in order to: (1) examine the prevalence of self-reported discrimination, (2) identify and target specific settings where discrimination happens, (3) establish who the perpetrators were and (4) identify the reactions and adaptation of those experiencing discrimination (Brustad *et al.* 2014).

Discrimination can be defined as a range of behaviours and practices that result in unfair and avoidable inequalities in power, resources or opportunities between groups in a society, and serve to support systems of privilege and oppression. Discrimination may be manifested across a continuum of actions, from subtle forms of social exclusion, and verbal aggression, through to illegal actions such as physical acts of violence (Ferdinand, Paradies & Kelaheer 2015). Discrimination persists as a cause of exclusion, conflict and disadvantage on an international scale (United Nations 2009), and existing data suggest that discrimination is increasing in many national contexts (Paradies *et al.* 2015). Predominant types of adverse discrimination may be based on race/ethnicity, culture, gender, age, sexuality, disability, religion, nationality, or other causes. Discrimination happens in multiple settings, including families, schools, the workplace, in the media or on the Internet, in trading, in finding employment, in accessing medical care or other public agencies and social services, in the local community, and on the street or in public settings (Krieger 2001). Types and settings of discrimination can be both overlapping and mutually reinforcing; therefore, individuals may simultaneously face multiple forms of discrimination (Viruell-Fuentes, Miranda & Abdulrahim 2012). Discrimination may originate at different levels: *personal* or *internalised* (e.g., the incorporation of racist attitudes, beliefs or ideologies); *interpersonal* (interactions between individuals) or *structural* (e.g., institutional policies that restrict access to opportunities or resources) (Hansen 2015). This paper focuses specifically on the investigation of self-reported interpersonal discrimination amongst the adult indigenous Sami and non-indigenous populations in Norway.





Map 1. Investigation area of the SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study.

The Sami are the only recognised indigenous people in Europe, having closely-related languages and cultural features. They mainly inhabit the northern part of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia's Kola Peninsula. The Sami languages belong to the Finno-Ugric branch of the Uralic language family. The traditional Sami lifestyle and culture includes involvement in occupations related to hunting, fishing, farming and reindeer husbandry. However, few are holding on to their traditional ways of life (Hansen 2015) resulting in considerable migration from traditional Sami municipalities to urban towns and cities during the last decades (Sørli & Broderstad 2011). The Sami population is estimated to be between 60,000 and 100,000 individuals, residing in the four countries (Young *et al.* [eds.] 2012), of which two-thirds live in Norway. However, this study targeted the indigenous Sami people that live in Arctic rural communities with fewer than 3,000 inhabitants except one city (Alta, with 19,822 residents per 1 January 2014, which was included as one of the twenty-five communities).

In a previous study (the SAMINOR 1 study 2003–2004), we found that Sami adults experienced ethnic discrimination significantly more often than the ethnic non-indigenous population in Norway (Hansen 2011). Ethnic discrimination occurred most frequently amongst respondents with a strong Sami affiliation living in Sami minority areas (Hansen 2008). According to a recent review (Midtbøen & Liden 2015), research on discrimination has been conducted far more extensively on immigrant populations than on the indigenous (Sami) population, or on other national minorities in Norway. An important underlying factor is the absence of ethnicity data (on the Sami people) in national censuses (Pettersen & Brustad 2013). This paper addresses this obvious knowledge gap concerning equality, and the challenges that discrimination poses for the Sami population in Norway. In the present population-based study on health and living conditions in areas with mixed Sami and Norwegian settlements (the SAMINOR 2 questionnaire survey), we included multiple dimensions of discrimination, including typology, where these experiences occurred, perpetrators and the response of those discriminated against to these experiences (Brustad *et al.* 2014).

## Materials and Methodology

### *Survey*

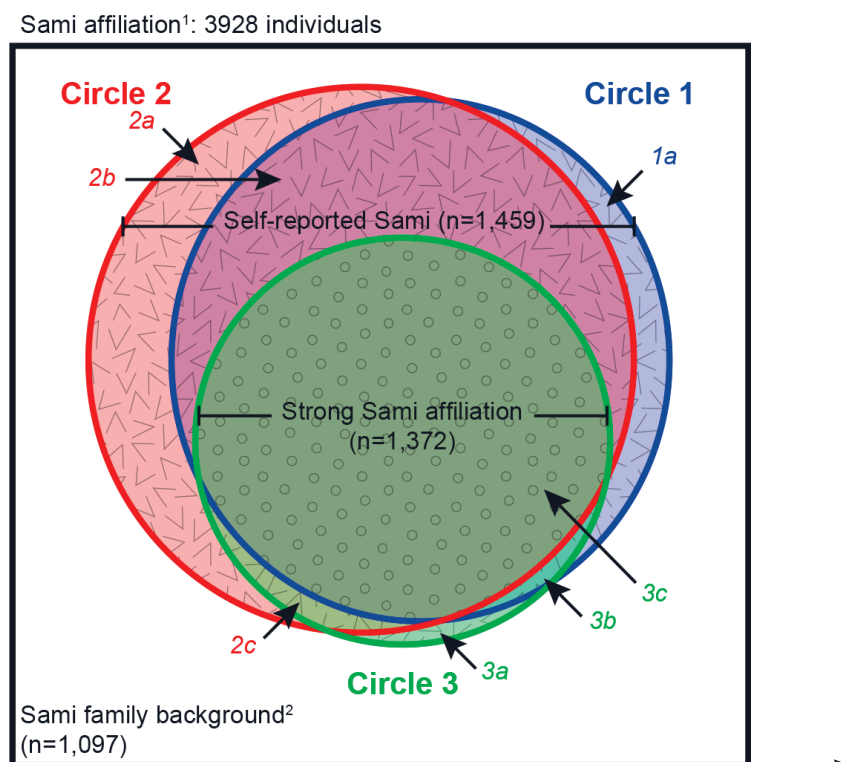
This study is based on the Population-Based Study on Health and Living Conditions in Areas with both Sami and Norwegian Populations—the SAMINOR 2 Questionnaire Study, which was a cross-sectional health survey. The first population-based study on health and living conditions in areas with both Sami and Norwegian populations, the SAMINOR 1 study,

was conducted in 2003–2004 and has previously been described in detail (Lund *et al.* 2007). The SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study was designed as a follow-up study on issues addressed in the first SAMINOR, but was also expanded to include the introduction of a broader examination of discrimination. The SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study itself has been described in a recent paper (Brustad *et al.* 2014).

## Sample

All inhabitants aged between 18 and 69 years registered in the Central Population Registry in selected municipalities with Sami and non-Sami populations (44,669 people) received a postal invitation to participate (Fig. 1); 1,424 were returned unopened, and therefore classified as technically “missing,” leaving a total of 43,245 persons eligible for the study. Among these, 11,600 returned a completed questionnaire (hence, the participation rate was 27 %). Further details concerning the material and methodology of the SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study have been published previously (Brustad *et al.* 2014).

Fig. 1. Distribution of sub-populations among participants with Sami affiliation—The SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study.



- <sup>1</sup> *Sami affiliation* is defined as Sami language being spoken at home by at least one of the grandparents, parents or the respondent, or Sami ethnic background reported for respondent or a parent, or that the respondent considers himself/herself as Sami.
- <sup>2</sup> Respondents who reported use of the Sami language or ethnicity for grandparents or parents, but did not consider themselves to be Sami or to have a Sami background/home language.

**Circle 1:** *Self-perceived Sami(ness)* (2,321 individuals) is defined as “Yes” to the question: “I consider myself Sami.”

1a: 118 participants reported Self-perceived Saminess, without saying that they have Sami ethnic background and Sami as home language.

**Circle 2:** *Sami ethnic background* (2,645 individuals) is defined as “Yes” to the question: “My ethnic background is Sami.”

2a: 420 participants reported Sami ethnic background but did not report self-perceived Saminess and Sami as home language.

2b: 805 participants reported both self-perceived Saminess and Sami ethnic background, but not Sami as home language.

2c: 48 participants reported Sami ethnic background and Sami as home language, but not self-perceived Saminess.

**Circle 3:** *Sami as home language* (1,488 individuals) is defined as “Yes” to the question: “My home language is Sami.”

3a: 42 participants reported Sami as home language, but not Self-perceived Saminess and Sami ethnic background.

3b: 26 participants reported both self-perceived Saminess and Sami as home language, but not Sami ethnic background.

3c: Strong Sami affiliation. “Yes” to all three following questions: “I consider myself Sami,” “My ethnic background is Sami” and “My home language is Sami.”

*Strong Sami affiliation* (area green circles; 2c, 3a and 3b) (1,372 individuals) was defined as answering “Yes” to all three following questions: “I consider myself Sami”, “My ethnic background is Sami” and “My home language is Sami.”

*Self-reported Sami* (area marked with ^) (1,459 individuals) was defined as answering “Yes” to minimum one (one or two) of the three following questions: “I consider myself Sami,” “My ethnic background is Sami” and “My home language is Sami,” but not “Yes” to all three questions.

*Sami family background* (white area within the frame beyond the circles) was defined as respondents who reported use of the Sami language or ethnicity for grandparents or parents, but did not consider themselves to be Sami or personally consider that they have a Sami background/home language.

## Key Variables

### *Self-Reported Discrimination*

Participants were asked, "Have you ever been discriminated against?" The response alternatives were: "Yes, during the last two years;" "Yes, previously;" "No" and "I do not know." Respondents answering "Yes, during the last two years" or "Yes, previously," received additional questions concerning: (1) how often it had happened ("very often," "sometimes" or "seldom"); (2) the perceived reason for being discriminated against (i.e., physical disabilities, sexual orientation, learning difficulties, gender, religion or beliefs, ethnic background, geographical affiliation, age, illness or other factors); (3) where the discrimination took place (i.e., Internet, in school, at work, applying for a job, at voluntary work/in organisations, in contact with government agencies, within family/relatives, when renting/buying house/apartment, asking for bank loan, accessing medical treatment, in a shop/restaurant, in the local community, somewhere else or other places); and (4) who the perpetrators were (i.e., public employee, work colleagues, those belonging to the same ethnic group as the respondent, those belonging to other ethnic group than the respondent, fellow student(s), teachers/employees, other people or unknown people).

### *Ethnicity*

The *ethnicity* of the participant was decided based on the following questions: "Which language do you/did you use at home?;" "Which language did your parents use at home?;" "Which language did your grandparents use at home?;" and "What do you consider yourself as?" The response options were: "Norwegian;" "Sami;" "Kven;" or "Other." Questions of the ethnic background of the respondents and the respondents' parents used the same response options. Respondents were also asked about their self-perceived ethnicity; specifically, "What do you consider yourself as?" For each of the above questions, respondents were allowed to provide more than one answer. Based on responses to these questions, *Sami affiliation* was defined as Sami language being spoken at home by at least one of the grandparents, parents or the respondent, or Sami ethnic background reported for respondent or a parent, or that the respondent considered himself/herself as Sami.

Moreover, additional sub-populations with varying Sami affiliation could be constructed. "Strong Sami affiliation" represented those answering "Yes" to the three following questions: "I consider myself Sami;" "My ethnic background is Sami;" and "My home language is Sami." Another sub-population termed "Self-reported Sami" represented those answering "Yes" to either one or two (but not three) of the questions. Respondents who reported use of the Sami language by, or the Sami ethnicity of, their grandparents

or parents, but did not consider themselves to be Sami, or reported that they did not have a personal Sami background/home language, were categorised as people with a *Sami family background* (See Fig. 1 for distribution of sub-populations among participants with Sami affiliation). The variables are described in more detail by Lund *et al.* (2007), Brustad *et al.* (2014), and Hansen (Hansen 2008; Hansen, Melhus, Høgmo & Lund 2008; Hansen, Melhus & Lund 2010; Hansen 2011; Hansen & Sørli 2012; Hansen, Brustad & Johnsen 2015).

### *Other Variables*

Background demographic information such as education, income and source of income was accrued via responses to the questionnaire; and age, gender and municipality from Statistics Norway (SSB). Four age groups were categorised from the respondents' years of birth: 18–29, 30–49, 50–59 and 60–69 years. Information about education was classified according to the number of years spent in school. Information about gross income per year was categorised into four groups: low (<300,000 NOK), medium (301,000–600,000 NOK), high (601,000–900,000 NOK) and very high (>900,000 NOK). We defined the municipalities of Kautokeino, Karasjok, Nesseby, Tana and Porsanger as *Sami majority areas*, and the municipalities of Røros, Snåsa, Røyrvik, Namskogan, Narvik, Grane, Hattfjelldal, Tysfjord, Evenes, Skånland, Lavan-gen, Lyngen, Storford, Kåfjord, Kvænangen, Loppa, Kvalsund, Lebesby and Sør-Varanger as *Sami minority areas*. Alta (the largest municipality in the northernmost county) was the only city in the sample, with 19,822 residents (per 1 January 2014) (see Fig. 1).

### *Ethics*

Written informed consent was obtained by the participants' answering "Yes" to the questionnaire item, "I approve my participation in this questionnaire, according to the information given in the information letter." The data collection and storage of data was approved by the Norwegian National Data Inspectorate (*Datatilsynet*), and this project was approved by the Regional Committees for Medical and Health Research Ethics (REK-Nord).

### *Data Treatment and Statistical Analysis*

SPSS Statistics Version 22 was used for statistical analyses. Participants' experiences of discrimination were categorised into "none;" "low" (reported that experiences of discrimination had happened "seldom"); "medium" (reported that experiences of discrimination had happened "sometimes"); "high" (reported that experiences of discrimination had happened "very often"); and "total" (of those reporting experiences of discrimination, i.e., the

	N	%
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	5,149	44.4
Female	6,451	55.6
Missing	-	-
<b>Age (years)<sup>a</sup></b>	<b>49.9 ±13.7</b>	
18–29	1,484	12.8
30–49	4,289	37.0
50–59	2,933	25.3
60–69	2,894	24.9
Missing	-	-
<b>Gross income</b>		
Low	1,633	14.1
Medium	4,245	36.6
High	3,667	31.6
Very high	1,612	13.9
Missing	443	3.8
<b>Education (in years)</b>		
<7	301	2.6
7–9	1,456	12.6
10–12	3,090	26.6
13–16	3,941	34.0
>16	2,599	22.4
Missing	213	1.8
<b>Living area</b>		
Sami minority	9,179	79.2
Sami majority	2,417	20.8
Missing	4	0.0
<b>Ethnic distribution 1</b>		
Sami affiliation <sup>b</sup>	3,928	34.1
Non-Sami affiliation <sup>c</sup>	7,577	65.8
Missing	95	0.1
<b>Ethnic distribution 2</b>		
Strong Sami affiliation <sup>d</sup>	1,372	11.9
Self-reported Sami <sup>e</sup>	1,459	12.7
Sami family background <sup>f</sup>	1,097	9.5
Non-Sami <sup>c</sup>	7,577	65.8
Missing	95	0.1

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the sample (N=11,600)—the SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study.

<sup>a</sup> Mean ± SD.

<sup>b</sup> *Sami affiliation* was defined as Sami language being spoken at home by at least one of the grandparents, parents or the respondent, or Sami ethnic background reported for respondent or a parent, or that the respondent considers him-/herself as Sami.

<sup>c</sup> Reporting non-Sami affiliation.

<sup>d</sup> *Strong Sami affiliation* was defined as answering "Yes" to all three following questions: "I consider myself Sami," "My ethnic background is Sami" and "My home language is Sami."

<sup>e</sup> *Self-reported Sami* was defined as answering "Yes" to minimum one (one or two) of the three following questions: "I consider myself Sami," "My ethnic background is Sami" and "My home language is Sami," but not "Yes" to all three questions.

<sup>f</sup> *Sami family background* was defined as respondents who reported use of the Sami language or ethnicity for grandparents or parents, but did not consider themselves to be Sami or personally considered that they have a Sami background/home language.

total of the “low,” “medium” and “high” frequency categories). In Figs. 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 4a, 4b, and Tables 2 and 4, the “total” category of experience of discrimination is used, and in Table 3 (and also Table 4, for some of the calculations) the “medium” and “high” categories were combined into a single “medium/high” category. In Table 1, demographic characteristics of the sample are presented (in numbers and percentages). In Fig. 1, the distribution of the sub-populations amongst participants with Sami affiliation are presented ( $n=3,928$  individuals). In Figs. 1a and 1b, the characteristics of discrimination experienced by those who reported having been discriminated against ( $n=2,496$ ) are presented as percentage-based pie charts. Information on the types, settings of and perpetrators of discrimination experienced by Sami and non-Sami populations are presented in clustered column charts in Figs. 2a, 2b, 3a, 3b, 4a and 4b (for both males and females, as a percentage of the total number of members of each ethnic group); here, chi-squared analyses were used to test for differences between items, and ethnic groups.

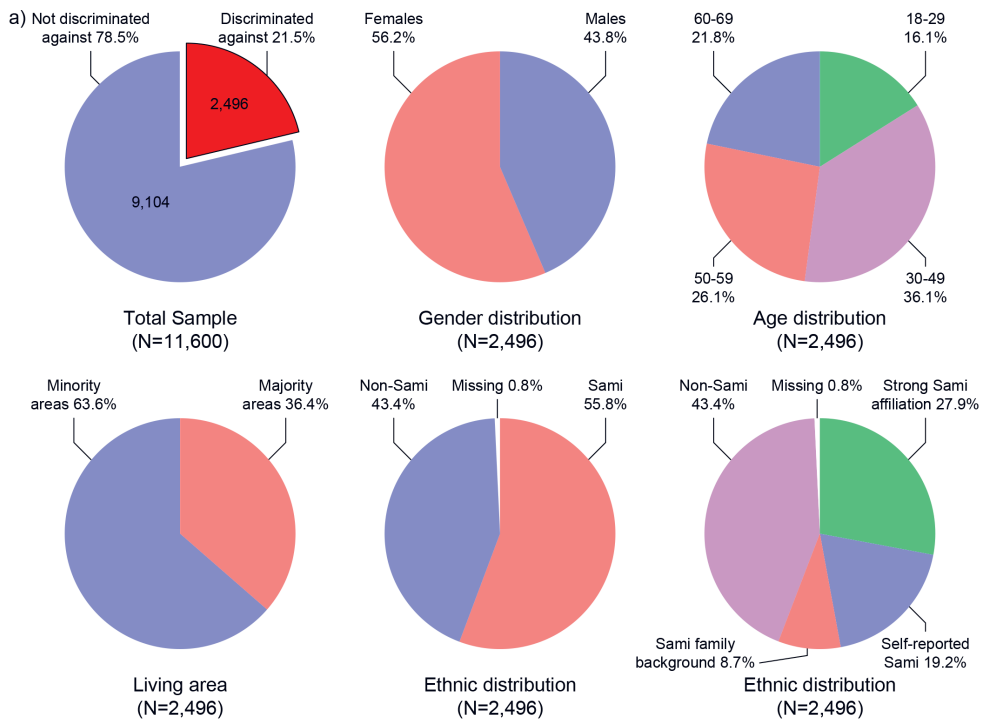


Fig. 1a. Discrimination characteristics (those who have been discriminated against) of the sample (presented with pie charts).



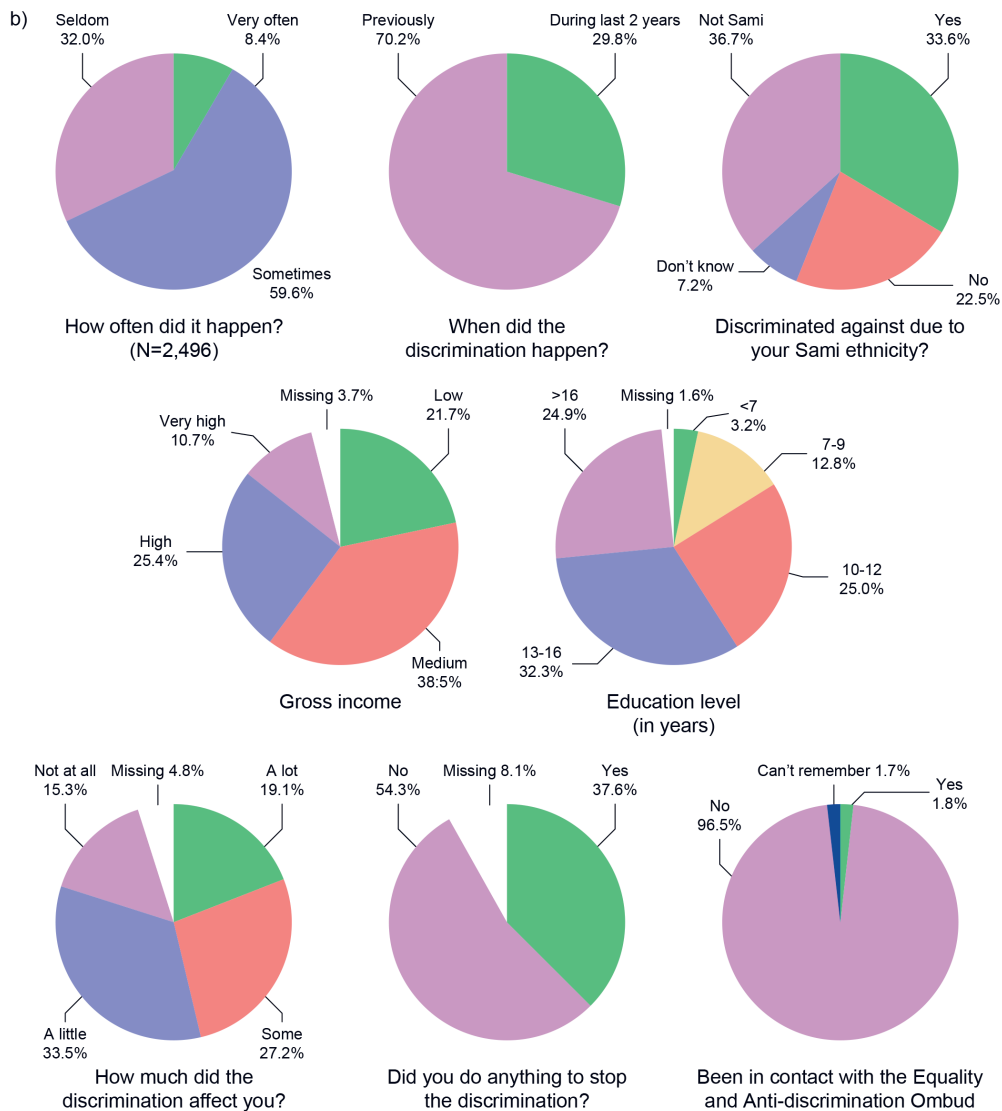


Fig. 1b. Discrimination characteristics (those who have been discriminated against) of the sample (presented with pie charts).

Table 2. Experiences of discrimination by demographic characteristics—the SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study.

Setting	$\chi^2$	df	$p^*$
Age	41.5	3	<0.001
Gender	0.46	1	0.50
Ethnic affiliation	20.3	4	<0.001
Education	466.6	2	<0.001
Income	197.1	3	<0.001
Living area	1040.9	3	<0.001
*Chi-square analyses was used to examine difference between demographic characteristics and experiencing discrimination			

In Table 2, chi-square analyses were used to examine demographic differences between groups of people who reported experiencing discrimination at different levels of frequency. Pearson's correlations were used to assess the relationship between exposure to discrimination in the SAMINOR 1 and the SAMINOR 2 studies (Table 3). In Table 4 logistic regression analyses (including 95 % confidence intervals [CI]) were conducted to examine the effects of ethnic Sami affiliation (which was the independent variable, with non-Sami as the reference group) on the total reported experience of discrimination (the total reporting experiences of discrimination, i.e., the total of the "low," "medium" and "high" frequency categories was the dependent variable) and discrimination that had happened within the last two years. We hypothesised that strong Sami affiliation would be more positively associated with higher level of experiences of discrimination, than would be weaker or no Sami affiliation. All models controlled for age, gross income and education as potential confounding variables. In addition, the likelihood ratio test (including the associated  $p$ -value) was performed in order to assess the differences between ethnic groups in terms of their members' experiences of discrimination. As some participants did not complete every item, valid percentages are reported for frequencies. Missing data were hence removed.

## Results

A total of 11,600 people participated in the population-based study on health and living conditions in areas with mixed Sami and Norwegian settlements—the SAMINOR 2 questionnaire survey. In total, 3,928 (34.1 %) of the participants had some type of Sami affiliation, and of these, 59.1 % reported that they considered themselves as Sami (Fig. 1).

Demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. The majority of participants were women. The mean age of the sample was 50 years ( $SD=4$ ), and the majority of the participants had a medium household income, a high education level and were living in rural areas (Sami minority living areas). One third of the participants had a Sami affiliation.

Around one in five of the participants reported having experienced discrimination at least once ( $n=2,496$ ) (Fig. 1a). Among these, 8.4 % reported that discrimination occurred "very often," 59.6 % "sometimes," and 32 % "seldom." Almost one third of respondents reported having experienced discrimination within the preceding two years (Fig. 1b). Sami respondents with strong Sami affiliation experienced discrimination during the last two years significantly more frequently than non-Sami participants (16.5 % and 4.4 % respectively; ( $p < 0.001$ ) (Table 4).

Ethnicity, living areas, age, education and household income were all significantly associated with differences in frequencies of experiencing discrimination (Table 2). In general, Sami people reported discrimination more frequently than non-Sami respondents. Sami people living in Sami minority areas were more likely to experience discrimination than were Sami people living in Sami majority areas. There were no statistically significant gender differences in this respect. Amongst respondents, the prevalence of discrimination decreased with increasing age (from 30 to 69 years) ( $p < 0.001$ ). One third of the participants related the discrimination they experienced to their Sami ethnicity. Respondents aged between 30 and 49 years, and with medium household income and medium high education level, reported the highest levels of discrimination. More than one third of the participants reported having done something to stop the discrimination, and one fifth reported that the discrimination affected them a lot. Only 1.8 % of those discriminated against had been in contact with the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman Service in Norway (Fig. 1b). 78.5 % of the respondents reported that they had no experience of being discriminated against (Fig. 1a).

The most frequent types of discrimination reported were those based on ethnic background, gender and geographical affiliation. Ethnic discrimination was reported by 33.3 % of male Sami respondents with strong Sami affiliation, and 31.9 % of female Sami respondents with strong Sami affiliation (Figs. 2a and 2b). 9.7 % of the Sami respondents with strong Sami affiliation (11.9 % of the females, and 6.7 % of the males in this category) and 2.2 % of the non-Sami respondents (2.9 % of the females and 1.2 % of the males in this category) reported having been subjected to gender-based discrimination. 9.3 % of the male Sami respondents with strong Sami affiliation, and 2.3 % of the male non-Sami respondents, reported having experienced

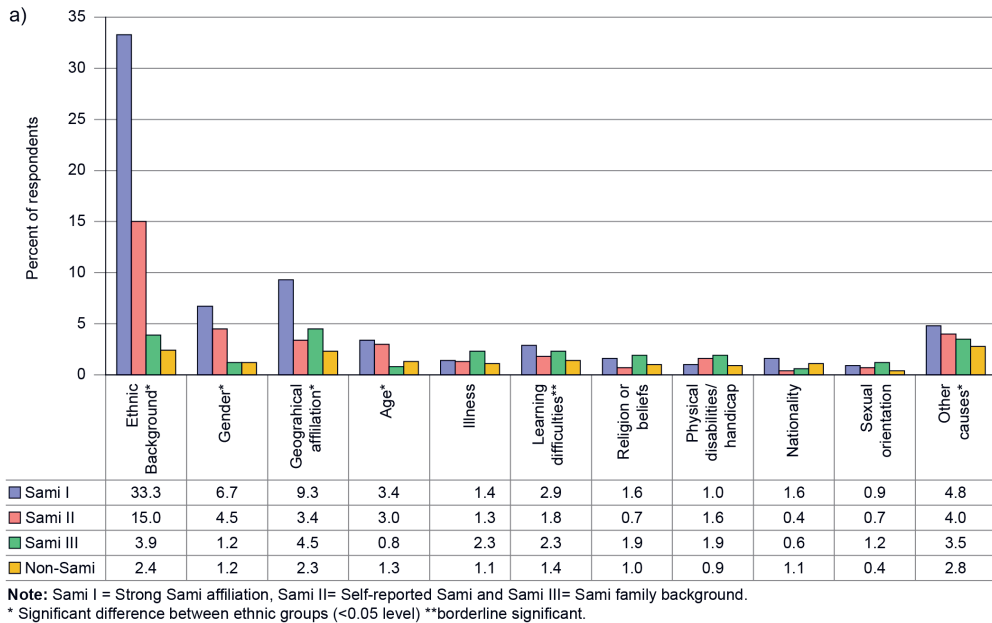


Fig. 2a. Type of discrimination experienced by Sami and non-Sami populations (males).

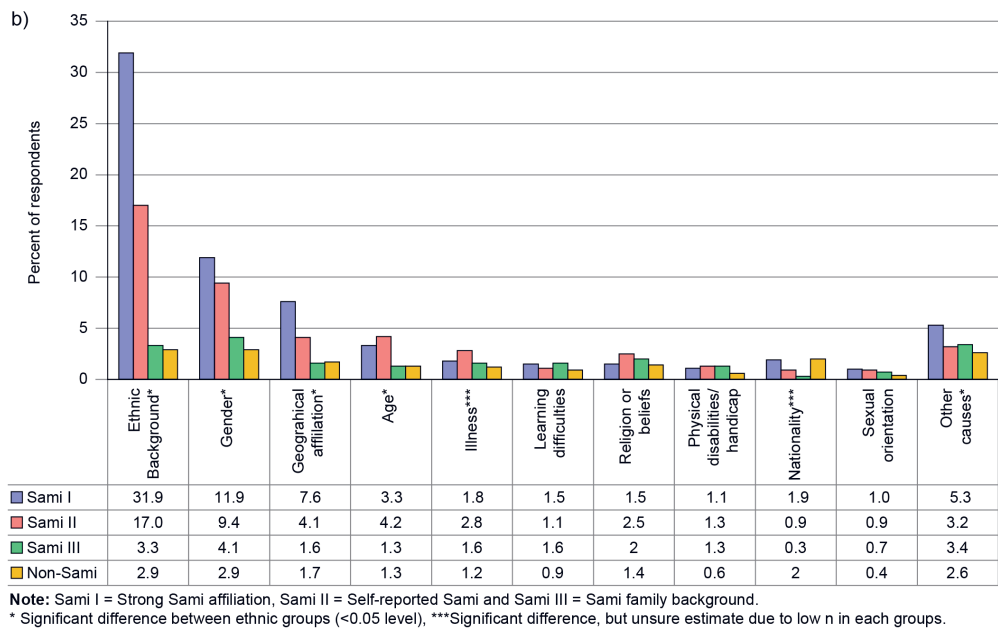
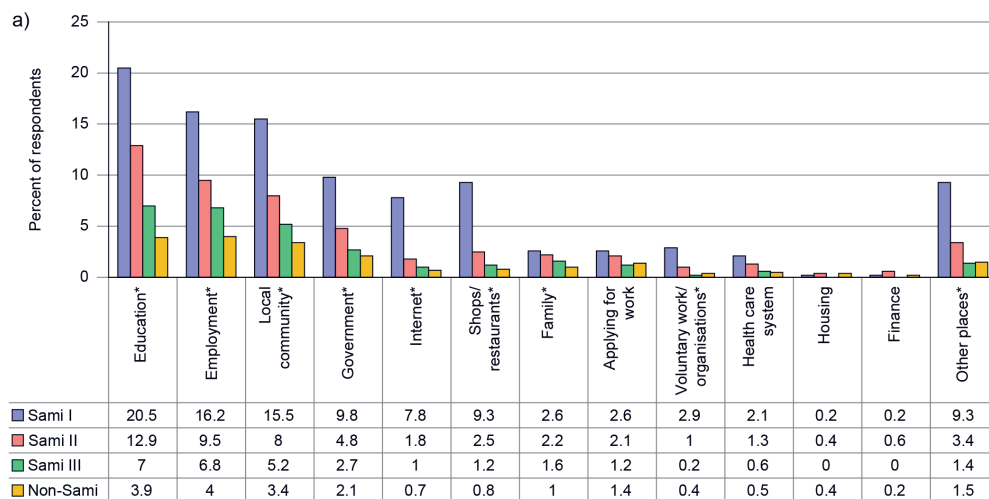


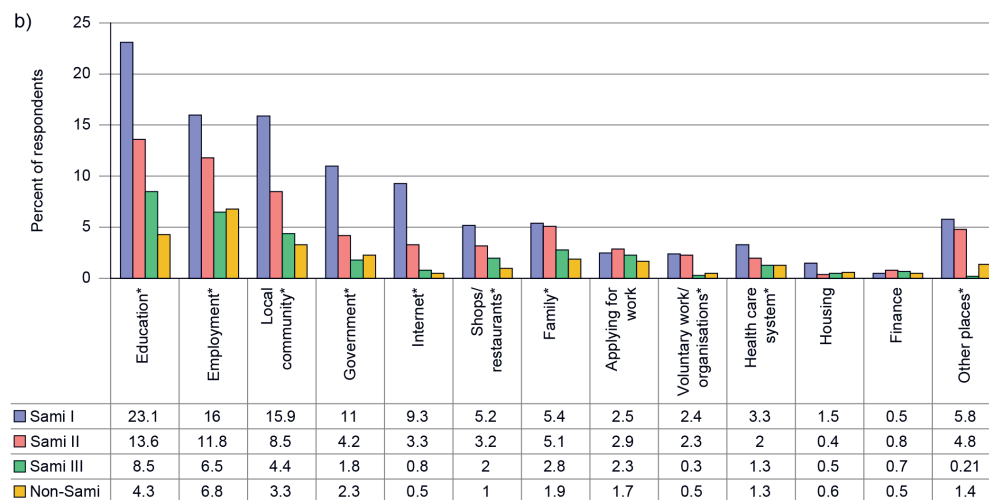
Fig. 2b. Type of discrimination experienced by Sami and non-Sami populations (females).



Note: Sami I = Strong Sami affiliation, Sami II= Self-reported Sami and Sami III= Sami family background.

\* Significant difference between ethnic groups (<0.05 level).

Fig. 3a. Settings where Sami and Non-Sami populations experienced discrimination (males).



Note: Sami I = Strong Sami affiliation, Sami II= Self-reported Sami and Sami III= Sami family background.

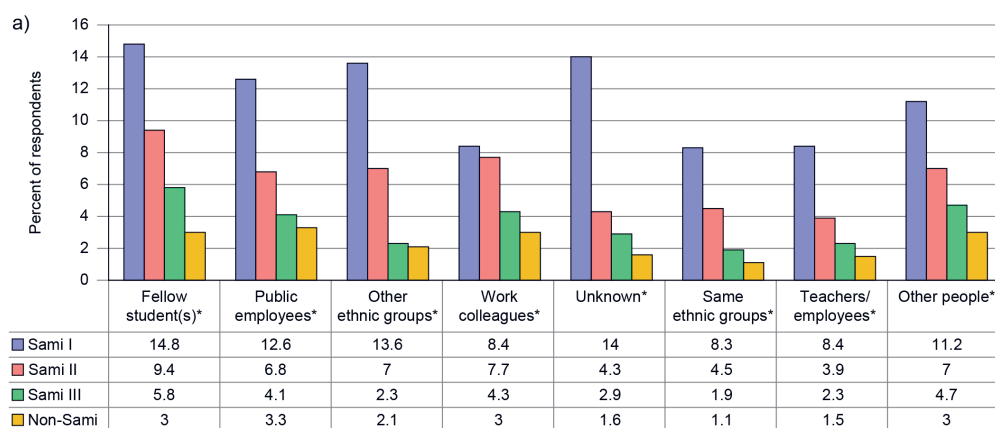
\* Significant difference between ethnic groups (<0.05 level).

Fig.3b. Settings where Sami and Non-Sami populations experienced discrimination (females).

discrimination because of geographical affiliation (Fig. 2a). Other types of discrimination reported included that based on age, illness, learning difficulties, religion or beliefs, physical disabilities, nationality, sexual orientation or other causes (see Figs. 2a and 2b). In total, 66 % of the respondents reported having been subjected to one type of discrimination, and 24 % and 7 % to two or three types of discrimination respectively. There were no ethnic differences between Sami and non-Sami respondents regarding the number of types of discrimination being reported (data not shown).

Sami respondents reported experiences with discrimination in multiple settings significantly more frequently than non-Sami respondents ( $p < 0.001$ ). Discrimination in education, employment or local community settings were most common. Among Sami with strong Sami affiliation, 20.5 % males and 23.1 % females reported discrimination at school compared to 3.9 % and 4.3 % non-Sami males and females, respectively (Fig. 3a and 3b).

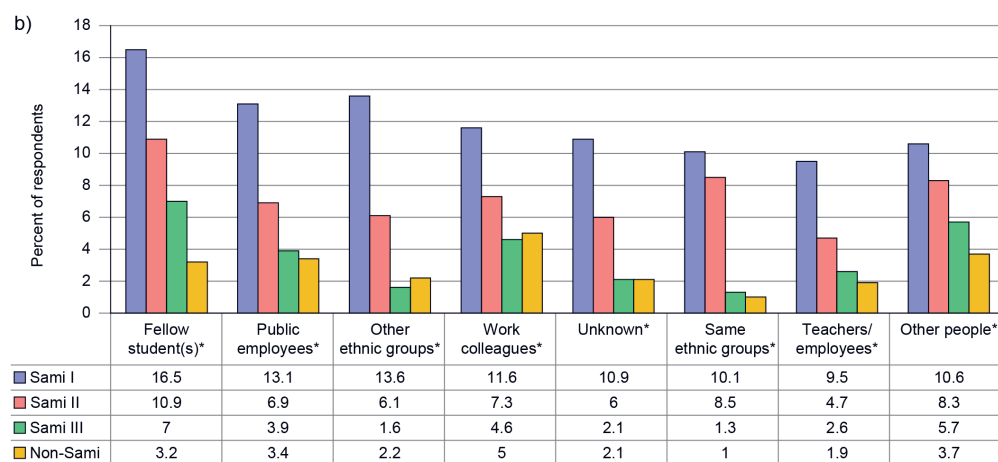
Among Sami with a strong Sami affiliation, 16.2 % males reported discrimination at work compared to 4.0 % among non-Sami participants (Fig. 3a), and 15.9 % females reported discrimination in the local community compared to 3.3 % among non-Sami participants (Fig. 3b). Furthermore, many participants reported having experienced discrimination in meetings with the government, and on the Internet. Indeed, experiences of cyber-discrimination were reported around eleven times more frequently by Sami males with strong Sami affiliation (7.8 %) than by non-Sami male participants (0.7 %) (Fig. 3a). In total, 51 % of the respondents reported discrimination in one setting, and 26 %, 11 % and 5 % in two, three and four settings, respectively (data not shown).



Note: Sami I = Strong Sami affiliation, Sami II = Self-reported Sami and Sami III = Sami family background.

\* Significant difference between ethnic groups (<0.05 level).

Fig. 4a. Perpetrator of discrimination by Sami and Non-Sami populations (males).



Note: Sami I = Strong Sami affiliation, Sami II = Self-reported Sami and Sami III = Sami family background.

\* Significant difference between ethnic groups (<0.05 level).

Fig. 4b. Perpetrator of discrimination by Sami and non-Sami populations (females).

Data on perpetrators showed that fellow students, public employees, people of ethnic groups other than that of the respondents, work colleagues, closely followed by “unknown” perpetrators, people of the same ethnic group as that of the respondents, and teachers, were all common perpetrators of discriminatory acts against respondents with Sami affiliation. For non-Sami respondents, the most common perpetrators of discrimination were work colleagues, public employees and fellow students (see Figs. 4a and 4b).

On comparing the prevalence of self-reported ethnic discrimination from the first (2003–2004) and the second SAMINOR study (2012), the high levels of discrimination stayed unchanged among those reporting “medium” to “high” discrimination rates. For non-Sami participants, it is evident that they reported higher levels of discrimination in 2012, than they did in 2003–2004 (see Table 3). The highest incidence rates of self-reported experiences of discrimination were found amongst participants with strong a Sami affiliation (50.8 % in total; 16.5 % and 34.3 % had experienced discrimination during the last two years and “before,” respectively). Respondents with less strong Sami affiliation reported lower levels of discrimination (32.8 % and 19.8 % amongst those categorised as “self-reported Sami,” and “having a Sami family background,” respectively); however, these rates were still significantly higher than those reported by non-Sami respondents (14.3 %) (Table 4).

When estimates were adjusted for age, gross income and level of education, Sami respondents were more likely to report having experienced discrimination than were non-Sami participants, and the highest prevalence rates were reported by Sami people with a strong Sami affiliation (OR = 6.16 [5.42–7.00]). Sami males and females with a strong Sami affiliation who were living in Sami minority areas reported the highest levels of discrimination (58.3 % and 56.9 % respectively). Sami respondents with a strong Sami affiliation reported that they had experienced more discrimination over the past two years significantly more often than the non-Sami respondents (16.5 % vs 4.4 % respectively;  $p < 0.001$ ; OR=4.15 CI:3.45–4.99). Non-Sami participants living in Sami majority areas reported a higher incidence rates of discrimination than did non-Sami participants living in Sami minority areas (see Table 4).



Table 3. Comparing the prevalence of self-reported ethnic discrimination from the first SAMINOR study (2003–2004) by the SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study (2012).

Age groups	Self-reported ethnic discrimination <sup>a</sup>				
	SAMINOR 1		SAMINOR 2 p-value*		
	n	%	n	%	
<b>Strong Sami affiliation<sup>1</sup></b>					
36–40	53	34.6	46	43.0	0.17
41–44	62	38.0	25	29.8	0.20
45–49	111	41.4	46	37.7	0.04
50–54	103	39.6	60	35.5	0.39
55–60	106	36.6	91	36.5	0.93
61–64	38	30.6	58	31.5	0.87
65–69	53	32.7	49	33.8	0.84
<b>Self-reported Sami<sup>2</sup></b>					
36–40	44	23.5	30	20.3	0.48
41–44	32	20.3	26	18.4	0.69
45–49	50	24.2	36	19.3	0.04
50–54	59	25.2	47	25.0	0.96
55–60	54	22.2	59	24.8	0.51
61–64	17	15.6	34	24.5	0.08
65–69	25	17.7	26	19.7	0.68
<b>Sami family background<sup>3</sup></b>					
36–40	11	7.2	14	12.4	0.15
41–44	10	8.2	12	10.5	0.54
45–49	17	10.1	17	12.7	0.47
50–54	14	7.2	11	9.2	0.52
55–60	22	9.2	40	21.7	<0.001
61–64	9	7.6	10	8.3	0.83
65–69	9	7.0	12	10.8	0.31
<b>Non-Sami<sup>4</sup></b>					
36–40	36	3.4	74	10.6	<0.001
41–44	47	5.4	64	9.4	0.002
45–49	75	6.3	76	8.4	0.06
50–54	64	4.7	88	9.7	<0.001
55–60	73	4.6	99	8.6	<0.001
61–64	26	3.0	65	7.7	<0.001
65–69	26	3.2	71	7.9	<0.001

- <sup>a</sup> Self-reported ethnic discrimination was defined as in the SAMINOR 1: and in the SAMINOR 2: “Yes” to the question: “Have you ever been discriminated against?” or positive response to one of the other discrimination questions (type, place etc.) in the survey, as happened “very often” (high) or “sometimes” (medium).
- <sup>1</sup> Strong Sami affiliation was defined as answering “Yes” to all three following questions: “I consider myself Sami,” “My ethnic background is Sami” and “My home language is Sami.”
- <sup>2</sup> Self-reported Sami was defined as answering “Yes” to minimum one (one or two) of the three following questions: “I consider myself Sami,” “My ethnic background is Sami” and “My home language is Sami,” but not “Yes” to all three questions.
- <sup>3</sup> Sami family background was defined as respondents who reported use of the Sami language or ethnicity for grandparents or parents, but did not consider themselves to be Sami or personally consider they have a Sami background/home language.
- <sup>4</sup> Reporting non-Sami affiliation.
- \* Chi-square test for difference between SAMINOR 1 and SAMINOR 2 ethnic groups and self-reported discrimination.
-

Table 4. Prevalence and odd ratio estimates of discrimination in Sami and Non-Sami populations by gender and living areas - The SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study

		Self-reported discrimination <sup>a</sup>			
	Ethnic affiliation	Total <sup>0</sup>	Before <sup>b</sup>		
			Total <sup>8</sup>	Often/ Sometimes <sup>9</sup>	
		% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	
Total	Strong Sami affiliation <sup>3</sup>	50.8 (697)	34.3 (470)	23.4 (321)	
	Self-reported Sami <sup>4</sup>	32.8 (479)	24.5 (375)	16.2 (236)	
	Sami family background <sup>5</sup>	19.8 (217)	14.9 (164)	9.8 (107)	
	Non-Sami <sup>6</sup>	14.3 (1085)	9.9 (748)	6.3 (479)	
	<i>P-value</i> <sup>7</sup>	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	
Sami majority					
Males	Strong Sami affiliation <sup>3</sup>	50.5 (220)	36.9 (161)	23.2 (101)	
	Self-reported Sami <sup>4</sup>	35.2 (77)	25.6 (56)	16.0 (35)	
	Sami family background <sup>5</sup>	24.2 (23)	20.0 (19)	9.5 (9)	
	Non-Sami <sup>6</sup>	23.2 (64)	15.9 (44)	10.5 (29)	
	<i>P-value</i> <sup>7</sup>	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	
Females	Strong Sami affiliation <sup>3</sup>	47.6 (297)	31.4 (196)	23.2 (145)	
	Self-reported Sami <sup>4</sup>	32.5 (87)	20.5 (55)	13.4 (36)	
	Sami family background <sup>5</sup>	26.4 (28)	22.6 (24)	17.0 (18)	
	Non-Sami <sup>6</sup>	28.0 (104)	18.0 (67)	11.8 (44)	
	<i>P-value</i> <sup>7</sup>	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	
Sami minority					
Males	Strong Sami affiliation <sup>3</sup>	58.3 (84)	37.5 (54)	22.9 (33)	
	Self-reported Sami <sup>4</sup>	31.1 (141)	26.2 (119)	18.3 (83)	
	Sami family background <sup>5</sup>	19.5 (76)	14.6 (57)	9.0 (35)	
	Non-Sami <sup>6</sup>	12.9 (399)	9.1 (281)	6.4 (197)	
	<i>P-value</i> <sup>7</sup>	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	
Females	Strong Sami affiliation <sup>3</sup>	56.9 (95)	34.7 (58)	24.6 (41)	
	Self-reported Sami <sup>4</sup>	33.6 (174)	24.5 (127)	15.8 (82)	
	Sami family background <sup>5</sup>	17.8 (90)	12.6 (64)	8.9 (45)	
	Non-Sami <sup>6</sup>	13.5 (517)	9.2 (355)	5.4 (208)	
	<i>P-value</i> <sup>7</sup>	<0.001	<0.001	<0.001	

	Last 2 <sup>c</sup> years		Adjusted OR <sup>1</sup>	Adjusted OR <sup>2</sup>
	Total <sup>8</sup>	Often/ Sometimes <sup>9</sup>	Total <sup>8</sup> Independent of time frame	Total <sup>8</sup> Last 2 years
	% (n)	% (n)	(95% CI)	(95% CI)
	16.5 (227)	12.5 (172)	6.16 (5.42-7.00)	4.15 (3.45-4.99)
	8.4 (122)	6.4 (93)	2.89 (2.54-3.29)	1.85 (1.48-2.30)
	4.8 (53)	3.5 (38)	1.45 (1.23-1.72)	1.09 (0.80-1.47)
	4.4 (337)	3.2 (243)	1.00	1.00
	<0.001	<0.001		
	13.5 (59)	10.3 (45)	3.39 (2.39-4.79)	1.98 (1.14-3.44)
	9.6 (21)	7.8 (17)	1.84 (1.22-2.76)	1.34 (0.69-2.58)
	4.2 (4)	3.2 (3)	1.08 (0.62-1.88)	0.57 (0.19-1.74)
	7.2 (20)	5.4 (15)	1.00	1.00
	0.006	0.023		
	16.2 (101)	11.7 (73)	2.22 (1.67-2.95)	1.58 (1.05-2.40)
	11.9 (32)	7.8 (21)	1.05 (0.74-1.50)	1.01 (0.59-1.69)
	3.8 (4)	2.8 (3)	0.94 (0.56-1.57)	0.40 (0.14-1.17)
	9.9 (37)	7.0 (26)	1.00	1.00
	<0.001	0.003		
	20.8 (30)	16.7 (24)	9.28 (6.43-13.38)	6.55 (4.16-10.30)
	4.8 (22)	4.4 (20)	3.13 (2.48-3.95)	1.20 (0.74-1.93)
	4.9 (19)	3.6 (14)	1.52 (1.14-2.01)	1.17 (0.69-1.94)
	3.8 (118)	2.8 (86)	1.00	1.00
	<0.001	<0.001		
	22.2 (37)	18.0 (30)	8.80 (6.31-12.28)	6.08 (4.04-9.17)
	9.1 (47)	6.8 (35)	3.21 (2.60-3.97)	2.06 (1.45-2.92)
	5.1 (26)	3.6 (18)	1.39 (1.08-1.79)	1.23 (0.79-1.90)
	4.2 (162)	3.0 (116)	1.00	1.00
	<0.001	<0.001		

- <sup>a</sup> Self-reported discrimination was defined as Yes to the question: "Have you ever been discriminated against?" or positive response to one of the other discrimination questions (type, place etc.) in the survey.
- <sup>b</sup> Discrimination happened before, and not the last two years.
- <sup>c</sup> Discrimination happened last two years, and not before.
- <sup>0</sup> Total experience of discrimination. Self-reported discrimination was defined as Yes to the question: "Have you ever been discriminated against?" or positive response to one of the other. Discrimination happened before or last two years. Discrimination questions (type, place etc.) in the survey
- <sup>1</sup> Total experience of discrimination. Estimates adjusted for age, gross income and education (also tested for gender, but was not significant and taken out of model). Non-Sami was the reference population.
- <sup>2</sup> Total experience of discrimination as happened last two years. Estimates adjusted for age, gross income and education (also tested for gender, but was not significant and taken out of model). Non-Sami was the reference population.
- <sup>3</sup> Strong Sami affiliation was defined as answering "Yes" to all three following questions: "I consider myself Sami", "My ethnic background is Sami" and "My home language is Sami".
- <sup>4</sup> Self-reported Sami was defined as answering "Yes" to minimum one (one or two) of the three following questions: "I consider myself Sami", "My ethnic background is Sami" and "My home language is Sami," but not "Yes" to all three questions.
- <sup>5</sup> Sami family background was defined as respondents who reported use of the Sami language or ethnicity for grandparents or parents, but did not consider themselves to be Sami or personally consider they have a Sami background/home language.
- <sup>6</sup> Reporting non-Sami affiliation.
- <sup>7</sup> P-value from likelihood ratio test for difference between ethnic groups.
- <sup>8</sup> Self-reported ethnic discrimination was defined as happened "Very often" (high) or "Sometimes" (medium) or "Seldom (low).
- <sup>9</sup> Self-reported ethnic discrimination was defined as happened "Very often" (high) or "Sometimes" (medium).

## Discussion

Our principal aim in this paper has been to examine which discrimination Sami and non-Sami people experience, and how they respond to it. Accordingly, we examined the prevalence of self-reported discrimination, identified the settings where discrimination takes place, identified who the perpetrators are, and how those being discriminated react to these experiences.

The present data show that most indigenous Sami living in Norway experience discrimination regularly. In total, more than half of Sami respondents with a strong Sami affiliation, compared to one in ten non-indigenous respondents, reported having experienced discrimination. Comparably, more Sami than non-Sami respondents reported more frequent discrimination during the last two years, and that it happened in multiple settings. Sami respondents with a strong Sami affiliation living in Sami minority areas reported the highest levels of discrimination. The Sami respondents reported their ethnic background as the main reason for being discriminated. The results of the present study extends previous research on discrimination against the Sami people in Norway (Hansen 2008; Hansen, Melhus & Lund 2010; Hansen & Sørli 2012; Hansen 2011; Hansen, Brustad & Johnsen 2015), as well as the growing body of literature showing that indigenous people worldwide experience discrimination more frequently than the majority population (Paradies 2006; Paradies *et al.* 2015; Pascoe & Smart Richman 2009; Williams & Mohammed 2009).

The Sami people in Norway share many of the experiences of colonisation and forced assimilation as that of indigenous people living in other parts of the world (Minde 2005). In Norway, the process of assimilation, referred to as “Norwegianisation,” was at its most intense in the period from c. 1850 to 1959. The leading ideology in that period held that the Sami people were “different,” and “uncivilised;” therefore, Sami children had to be removed from their homes, families, and communities, in order to become educated as “good Norwegians,” or otherwise face extinction (Jensen 1991). Sami languages were banned, and Sami children were sent to boarding schools in order to remove them from their linguistic and cultural environment (Meløy 1980). The centrality of residential schools in the forcible assimilation of indigenous people in Norway has a parallel in the treatment of Aboriginal children in North America. In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada made an explicit and unequivocal acknowledgement that:

For over a century, the central goals of Canada’s Aboriginal policy were to eliminate Aboriginal governments; ignore Aboriginal rights; terminate the Treaties; and, through a process of assimilation, cause Aborig-

inal peoples to cease to exist as distinct legal, social, cultural, religious, and racial entities in Canada. The establishment and operation of residential schools were a central element of this policy, which can best be described as “cultural genocide.” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015: 1)

The Canadian federal government has estimated that over 150,000 First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children—approximately 30 % of Aboriginal children—attended Canada’s residential schools. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada further concluded that sending Aboriginal children to residential schools was done “not to educate them, but primarily to break their link to their culture and identity” (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada 2015: 2). Although the overt policies of assimilation may be a thing of the past in terms of today’s Norwegian society and politics, the collective historical memory and the negative consequences of this policy may project well into the future and shape peoples’ attitudes towards themselves and their ethnic pride. Centuries of colonial contact have irrevocably damaged the cultural traditions and practices of many Sami people, and have also had a lasting, negative impact on generations of Sami people (Hansen, Brustad & Johnsen 2015).

Over the last few decades, there has been a significant strengthening of legal measures against discrimination in Norway (United Nations Report 2014). In addition to comparatively strong gender equality legislation, legal protection against discrimination has been expanded through a series of legal regulations to cover ethnicity, national origin, language, religion, sexual orientation, disability and age, in accordance with the international legislature (Skjeie & Langvasbråten 2009). In modern times, Norwegian policy towards the Sami has been based on the recognition that the state of Norway was established on the territory of two peoples, the Norwegians and the Sami, and that both peoples have the same constitutional right to develop their culture and language (The Sami Act 1987). Norway has put considerable emphasis on promoting and protecting Sami and indigenous rights both on international and regional arenas. Norway was the first state to ratify the ILO Convention No. 169 concerning indigenous and tribal peoples in independent countries (ratified by Norway on 20 June 1990), and played an active role in the drafting and adoption of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Skogvang 2009). Hence, whilst Norway has enacted comprehensive legislation designed to combat discrimination, this study shows that few Sami individuals who have been discriminated against—less than 2 % of our participants—said that they had reported such discrimination to the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman.

It takes time to fundamentally change general frameworks in Norwegian politics, legislation and ordinances, as well as myths and attitudes, in order to appropriately address Sami culture, language, traditions and social needs (Arbeids- og inkluderingsdepartementet 2008). Many Sami people remain influenced by past assimilation politics despite the official legislation having been reversed. Simply “being different” in any respect is often the source of discrimination and harassment (Minton 2014), and, as a minority population, the Sami people are vulnerable (Hansen 2011).

When comparing the prevalence of self-reported discrimination from the first SAMINOR study (2003–2004) (Hansen 2008; Lund *et al.* 2007) with the SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study (2012) (Brustad *et al.* 2014), we found that Sami people in the different age cohorts between 36 and 69 years old experience the same high levels of discrimination in 2012 as they did almost a decade ago in 2003–2004. This indicates that the level of self-reported discrimination amongst Sami people in Norwegian society has remained constant, thus not changing for the better. However, for non-Sami participants we saw that they reported higher level of discrimination in 2012 than they did in 2003–2004. A reason for this may be that the SAMINOR 1 study focused on just one type of discrimination, namely *ethnic discrimination*, whereas the SAMINOR 2 study broadened the discrimination focus extensively by including several types of discrimination, and settings where also the majority population experienced discrimination.

The fact that the Sami people have been and currently are being discriminated has been increasingly acknowledged by the broader society (Hansen 2012). At several scientific conferences Sami individuals have told their personal stories of discrimination due to their ethnic background in the mainstream and social media. The former chairman of The Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman Service in Norway, Sunniva Ørstavik, stated on the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) that discrimination against Sami people is a serious social problem that needs a political initiative (NRK 2012a). For example, in 2012, a young Sami woman was verbally abused and physically attacked on the street outside a night club by a bunch of young men in the city of Trondheim (NRK 2012b). The then-Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg responded that, “It is unacceptable that people are being bullied and harassed because of their ethnicity in the Norwegian society” (NRK 2012c). In a statement by the former President of the Sami Parliament in Norway, Egil Olli, about the research that has been undertaken on discrimination against Sami people in Norway, Norway clearly has major challenges with finding solutions to the inequality and the elimination of discrimination against the Sami people in society (NRK 2011).



The current results show that Sami individuals who are highly “visible” by expressing their ethnicity, for example by using Sami language, are subject to higher levels of discrimination than Sami individuals reporting lower levels of Sami affiliation. Additionally, the type of discrimination that the Sami respondents reported most frequently was ethnic discrimination. “Visible difference” in general, in contemporary Norwegian society across multiple axes, has been associated with higher rates of reporting experiencing ethnic discrimination, amongst both national minorities, and immigrants and their descendants (Midtbøen & Liden 2015). The international literature also supports the general finding in Norway of more visible “minority” and/or ethnic groups experiencing higher levels of ethnic discrimination than do less visible groups (Ferdinand, Paradies & Kelaher 2015).

For almost thirty years, “gender” was the only comprehensively protected discrimination ground in Norwegian national legislation (The Gender Equality Act 1978) (Skjeie & Langvasbråten 2009). The Anti-Discrimination Act in Norway came into force 1 January 2006. The purpose of the act is to promote equality, ensure equal opportunities and rights and prevent discrimination based on ethnicity, national origin, descent, skin color, language, religion or belief. However, in Norway, there is still a lack of surveys about self-reported gender-based discrimination amongst the whole population (Skjeie *et al.* 2012). In our study, gender-based discrimination was the second most common type of discrimination reported, after ethnic discrimination. Sami females reported in this study showed significantly higher levels of gender-based discrimination than did their non-Sami counterparts. We know little about gender-based discrimination within the Sami population. However, the United Nations has recognised that gender-based discrimination may combine with other forms of discrimination, and present particular obstacles for women (United Nations 2000). We also know that violence against indigenous women is prevalent across the world (Kuokkanen 2015). In a recent study, Sami respondents (and particularly Sami females) were more likely to report interpersonal violence than were non-Sami respondents (Eriksen *et al.* 2015); furthermore, due to prevailing sexism and internalised colonialism within their communities, Sami females often experience dismissiveness, victim-blaming or normalisation of violence (Kuokkanen 2015). Intersecting forms of racism/stereotypes/ethnic discrimination and sexism render indigenous (Sami) women particularly vulnerable to various forms of gendered (emotional, physical or sexual) violence in mainstream society. Such factors could well underpin the finding that Sami women reported significantly higher levels of gender-based discrimination than did non-Sami women in our survey.

A clear picture of the association between having an ethnic minori-

ty background and an increased vulnerability towards being discriminated against or bullied at school came to light in the findings of the first SAMI-NOR study. Specifically, it indicated that Sami respondents were far more likely to experience discrimination or bullying at school than majority ethnic Norwegians (Hansen 2008; Hansen 2011). In the present study, the setting where the Sami people most frequently experienced discrimination was, once again, in the educational system. Lately, Norwegians have witnessed media accounts of findings from the National Public Survey (Norwegian *Elevundersøkelsen 2014–2015*) and a national White Paper, that school bullying or discrimination has occurred to a much greater extent in municipalities with a greater proportion of Sami students, than the national average figures for bullying in schools (Djupedal *et al.* 2015). This finding raises a serious question as to whether the 1998 Education Act (last updated 1 October 2015) (Ministry of Education and Research 2015) in Norway protects ethnic minority or Sami pupils equally well as ethnic majority Norwegians (Minton 2014). Furthermore, Norway has benefited from nationwide anti-bullying intervention programs for over three decades (Ertesvåg & Vaaland 2007; Olweus 1995; Olweus & Limber 2010; Roland 2014), although as Minton (Minton 2012; Minton 2014) has noted, a shortcoming of these programs has been their relative inattention to the addressing of prejudice as an underlying factor in bullying or discriminatory behaviour, which he has suggested as a design priority in the future development of anti-bullying/discrimination interventions (Minton 2014).

The workplace was the most commonly reported setting that non-Sami participants reported having experienced discrimination, and the second most common setting (after education) for Sami respondents.

Sami participants reported discrimination at work at rates of between 6.5 % and 16.2 %, (depending on their level of Sami affiliation). For non-Sami people, females reported the highest rates of discrimination in the workplace (6.8 % of all women). Previous studies in Norway on the prevalence of workplace bullying have recorded incidence rates that varied between 2 % and 14.3 %, depending on the methods of measurement and definitions employed by the researchers (Nielsen *et al.* 2009). However, the use of latent class cluster analysis has been considered as giving the most reliable estimates, and has indicated that as many as 6.8 % of people are exposed to a high degree of bullying behaviours at work (Nielsen *et al.* 2009). Our study's findings were consistent with this range, and indeed, a little higher for the Sami participants with a strong Sami affiliation. Hence, because a larger proportion of the Sami participants than the non-Sami participants in our study reported having experienced this form of discrimination, it is possible to suggest that workplace bullying is an even bigger problem for the Sami

population than it is for the non-Sami population in northern Norway. Furthermore, Sami participants in the present study faced discrimination more often than non-Sami participants in the local community; as when in contact with government agencies, or when visiting shops or restaurants. Sami people are thus more likely to encounter discriminatory attitudes in public spaces, a situation that may limit their democratic participation in the society, or their equitable access to social and public services.

The prevalence of cyber-bullying increased in Norway between early 2000 and 2010 (Roland 2014). In a study by the Centre for Behavioural Research conducted in 2008, it was concluded that traditional bullying affects about twice as many people as cyber-bullying does (Auestad 2011). International studies have found a slight tendency for girls, more than boys, to be exposed to cyber-bullying (Parker-Jenkins 2011). In the present study, the term “cyber-discrimination” was used. Sami respondents reported that they had experienced cyber-discrimination significantly more often than did their non-Sami counterparts. Cyber-discrimination was most frequently reported amongst the youngest (18–29 years old) Sami respondents. More than one in five Sami participants with strong Sami affiliation in the 18–29 years old age group reported having experienced cyber discrimination. In this respect, no significant gender differences were discernible amongst non-Sami participants, however, among Sami respondents as a whole, cyber-discrimination was significantly more frequently reported amongst Sami females, independent of age categories, although there were no gender differences between the youngest Sami respondents. We know little about cyber-discrimination among Sami people, as this has not been previously studied. What we know from the media (television, radio and newspapers) is that many Sami people experience insulting comments, hateful prejudices and stereotypical depictions of Sami culture and identity in different forms in the comment fields online and on various websites (Hansen 2012).

The level of discrimination was highest among Sami people with a strong Sami affiliation living in Sami minority areas, which we relate to the national assimilation process which had the greatest impact in those areas, typically being coastal communities (Bjørklund 1985; Høgmo 1986). The official policy towards Sami people in Norway has gradually changed from assimilation towards cultural safeguarding and a decolonisation of Sami society (Minde 2005), but despite the overall strengthening of Sami language and culture in Norway since the 1970s, the buffering effect of a growing Sami civil society today is more obvious in the Sami majority areas than in the Sami minority areas (Hansen 2015). Within the Sami majority areas, there are several well-established Sami institutions, including professional indigenous health and social service networks (Young & Bjerregaard [eds.]

2008). In some areas (predominantly Sami majority areas), so-called “Sami-ness” is a given and more accepted; in others (predominantly ethnic Norwegian majority areas), one must actively struggle for a visible Sami presence to be accepted. In these areas, the stigmatisation of and prejudice towards Sami people, and ethnicity-based conflicts, are still present (Hansen 2015).

Data on perpetrators show that fellow students (the most frequently reported perpetrators), public employees, members of other ethnic groups, work colleagues, closely followed by unknown people and other Sami people and their former teachers are all named as common perpetrators of discriminatory acts against respondents with Sami affiliation. It is worth noting that Sami people were significantly more likely than were majority Norwegians to report having been discriminated against by fellow students, people of other ethnic groups than themselves, unknown persons, teachers/employees and other Sami people. We have previously discussed school bullying or discrimination, and it was not surprising to find that there were fellow students who have acted as perpetrators of incidents of discrimination that have occurred at school. More surprising, perhaps, and certainly more alarming, was the finding that almost one in ten Sami with a strong Sami affiliation reported that they had experienced being bullied by teachers or employees at school or at work.

Sami respondents also reported experiencing discrimination from other Sami people. The historically based “shame” associated with belonging to Sami culture is perhaps one of the hardest and most important barriers to revitalisation and decolonisation in Sami individuals, Sami families and ethnically mixed local communities (Nergård 2011). The best example of such a distinction is found in Sami families where some of the members consider themselves as having a Sami background, whilst other members consider themselves as having a non-Sami identity. We find many examples of this in ethnically mixed Sami and non-Sami communities in northern Norway (where the Sami people have been exposed to forced assimilation), especially in the coastal Sami areas (Sami minority areas), where Norwegianisation (the forcible assimilation of the Sami people) has been particularly prominent (Bjørklund 1985; Minde 2005). Many Sami people have changed their identity and language because of a century-long Norwegianisation history (Høgmo 2012). This has caused many assimilated Sami individuals to keep silent about their Sami ethnic backgrounds, and even strongly denying their knowledge of, or connection to, their Sami heritage (Høgmo 2011). These factors may explain why assimilated Sami people may discriminate other in-group and “highly visible” Sami members.

For non-Sami participants, the three most typical categories of perpetrators of discrimination were work colleagues, public employees and fellow

students. This is, of course, related to the broader finding that it is in employment, school and in local communities/meetings with the government that the majority of ethnic Norwegians (non-Sami) most frequently experience discrimination.

More than 98 % of the respondents who reported having been discriminated against had *not* been in contact with the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman Service (EDO); hence, only a very few of the respondents reported that they had been in contact with the EDO for help. Several factors may underpin this finding. One of these relate to certain Sami “cultural norms,” where the traditional value of Sami resilience may prevent Sami people from talking about “problems” when facing discrimination (Kuokkanen 2015). The traditional value of Sami resilience may influence people to manage on their own, not to show weakness, or specifically, to keep problems such as discrimination to themselves or within the family, and generally to avoid seeking external help, particularly from official Norwegian institutions (Bongo 2012; Dagsvold, Møllersen & Stordahl 2015; Kaiser, Ruong & Renberg 2013). Another reason for not seeking help and advice from EDO could be related to structural problems, such as cultural and language barriers; and unfortunately, it is indeed the case that the EDO has neither a website in the Sami language, nor Sami-speaking advisors, although they do offer interpreters. Research in other public services has shown that Sami people prefer Sami-speaking advisors, rather than an interpreter between the Sami and Norwegian languages (Dagsvold, Møllersen & Stordahl 2015; Møllersen, Sexton & Holte 2009; Nystad, Melhus & Lund 2008). Hence, whilst a large proportion of the Sami people are Norwegian speakers, they may still experience a lack of the Sami language to express their sense of cultural identification with language and/or culture (Skutnabb-Kangas 1981; Vangsnes 2013), or may indeed prefer to use or feel more comfortable using the Sami language.

A growing body of research literature indicates that perceived discrimination is an acute and chronic stressor linked to mental and physical health problems (Paradies *et al.* 2015). One fifth of those discriminated against reported that the discrimination affected them a lot, and this group will be especially important to study further in relation to negative health outcomes. However, it is to be hoped those respondents who reported that they had actively done something to stop the discrimination (37.6 % of those who reported having been discriminated against) would have a buffering (protective) moderating effect on the negative effects that discrimination have on health and well-being, and we can assume that they would cope better than those who did not do anything to stop the harassment.

### *Strengths and Weaknesses of the Study*

The large number of participants (n=11,600) is a principal strength of this study. Furthermore, data was collected in multi-ethnic municipalities, making it possible to assess differences based on ethnicity. Having said this, the overall participation rate was low (27 %), especially amongst the 18–29 years age category, prompting concerns regarding potential selection bias among the youngest age group. However, despite the limitations in relation to low response rates, the SAMINOR 2 questionnaire study provides a unique database for researching prevalence of discrimination among the Sami and non-Sami populations in Norway. We have limited information about the non-respondents, other than that they were younger, and male. This might have influenced our estimate of prevalence of discrimination among the youngest. Education, household income and living areas were all significantly associated with differences in the frequency of experiencing discrimination. Respondents aged between 30 and 49 years, and those with medium household income and medium to high education levels, reported the highest levels of discrimination, and one reason for this might be that these categories of people had the highest overall response rate to the survey.

We used instruments (with several items) to measure everyday experiences of ethnic discrimination in different domains (such as school, work, local community setting, Internet, etc.), type (such as ethnic discrimination, gender discrimination, geographical affiliation etc.) and location (e.g., on the Internet, at school, at work, on applying for a job, etc.). This gave us a unique opportunity to capture discrimination in a broad sense, which has not previously been done in a large sample involving Sami and Norwegian populations in Norway.

The options for reporting ethnicity in the current questionnaire were the same as those used in the SAMINOR 1 study in 2003–2004. Due to its diverse nature, both the classification of ethnicity, and its use as an independent variable in research, is complex and somewhat controversial. We contend that self-reported ethnicity at the individual level (including the various types of ethnic affiliation) enabled a more comprehensive analysis across ethnic groups. Different definitions of ethnicity could change risk estimates. We are aware that the ethnic definition has limitations, since it may have different validity in different geographical regions, and within subgroups of the Sami population. The questionnaire and the information material were written in Norwegian, but also translated into three relevant Sami languages (North, Lule and South Sami), by professional translators. Information letters were sent out to all in Norwegian, and in the Sami languages relevant to the area. The Norwegian questionnaire was sent to all, and a translated version in the relevant Sami language was also included for



those living in the Administrative Area for the Sami Language (Nesseby, Tana, Karasjok, Porsanger, Kautokeino, Kåfjord, Lavangen, Tysfjord, Røyrvik and Snåsa) (Brustad *et al.* 2014).

As ethnicity is not recorded in any official register in Norway, we were not able to assess whether the non-respondents in the two ethnic populations differed. However, a comparison between participations in SAMINOR 2, and those participating in the first SAMINOR study, has been conducted (Brustad *et al.* 2014). The proportion of participants classified as indigenous did not differ between the SAMINOR 1 and SAMINOR 2 studies. As the participation rate in SAMINOR 1 was considerably higher (60.9 %), this population may well have been representative for the background population. Furthermore, compared to the participants in the SAMINOR 1 study, participants in the SAMINOR 2 study tended to have higher levels of education. A limitation of our study is the cross-sectional design, which did not allow for conclusions to be made regarding causality (Rothman 2012). Nevertheless, comparisons with the findings from the SAMINOR 1 study provided us with a unique opportunity for studying trends in prevalence of discrimination (over the last decade), especially those experienced by the Sami people living in the rural areas of central and northern Norway.

## Conclusions

Overall, Sami people with a strong Sami affiliation reported the highest levels of discrimination. Sami people with a strong Sami affiliation also reported having experienced significantly more discrimination before, and over the past two years, than did the non-Sami respondents. Sami participants reported experiencing the same high levels of discrimination in this study that they did almost a decade ago. The most frequent types of discrimination reported among Sami people were those based on ethnic background, gender and geographical affiliation, and many Sami females reported that they had experienced gender discrimination. Additionally, Sami respondents reported having experienced discrimination in multiple settings more often than did majority Norwegians; Sami respondents indicated that discrimination was most commonly reported in education, employment, and local community. Furthermore, many Sami reported having been discriminated against in meetings with the government, and, in shops or at restaurants and on the Internet.

Data on perpetrators showed that fellow students, public employees, people of ethnic groups other than those of the respondents, work colleagues, closely followed by “unknown” perpetrators, people of the same ethnic groups as the respondents, and teachers were all common perpetra-

tors of discriminatory acts against respondents with a Sami affiliation. In terms of responses to discrimination, around four in ten reported that they had done something to stop the discrimination, and one in five reported that the discrimination affected them a lot. However, less than 2 % of those who reported having been discriminated against had been in contact with the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombudsman Service (EDO) in Norway.

The findings of this study highlight the need to acknowledge and address the discrimination experienced by indigenous (Sami) people of Norway. The current research shows that for many indigenous Sami people living in Norway, the experience of discrimination is a regular occurrence. Discrimination towards the Sami people is a serious social problem, and this must be placed firmly on the political agenda. The findings suggest that interventions specifically designed to prevent discrimination towards the indigenous Sami people of Norway should be implemented.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND FUNDING

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